



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Blue Ridge Ranger District
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Blairsville, GA 30512

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File Code: 2720

Date: September 10, 2008

Dear Forest Stakeholder:

I am asking for your comments on the following application for a special use authorization to use National Forest System (NFS) lands as follows:

- ❖ The Blue Ridge Mountain Masters (BRMM) are requesting a special use permit to conduct a 50 kilometer run on National Forest System roads and a section of the Benton MacKaye Trail. The event would occur on Saturday, November 15, 2008 between 8:00 AM and 5:00 PM. This event would use a section of Noontootla Road (FS58) from Doublehead Gap Road south to Hickory Flats Road (FS251), Hickory Flats Road past church to Benton MacKaye Trail via a Georgia Department of Natural Resources wildlife opening, and the Benton MacKaye Trail (BMT) to Sapling Gap area (see attached map). The BRMM event is expected to have up to 40 participants. The start, finish, and post race activities would take place entirely on private land. The event would require aid stations and/or checkpoints to be set up along the route. Use would consist of participants running on the roads and trail. No ground disturbing activities will take place and all trash and temporary facilities would be removed by the BRMM at the conclusion of the event. The BRMM have conducted this event in consecutive years and no unexpected adverse effects have been observed following the event. Since this has become an annual event and the venue and activities are the same each year, this scoping will cover the next five events. If a major factor, such as time of year, type of activity, or location changes significantly, the event will be re-scoped.

An analysis is currently being conducted by Forest Service personnel for this type of special use authorization request, including an assessment of the possible environmental effects of the proposed action on NFS lands and on other users of the areas.

In general, the special use process involves a review of each application received to determine how the request would affect NFS lands and the public's use of these lands. Special use applications must be consistent with Federal, State, and local laws, regulations, and special orders that apply to the National Forests. Applications must also be consistent with the Forest Plan for the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forests (January, 2004), including all objectives and standards for management of the lands where a proposed special use area(s) is located.

I would like to hear from you regarding the proposed activity before making my decision for this request. The proposed activity appears to fall into a category of actions that may be excluded from documentation in an environmental impact statement or environmental assessment. This determination, however, will not be finalized until after consideration of your comments and concerns.

To have your comments considered in our decision process, we would appreciate receiving your comments by October 10, 2008. This will help ensure a complete and thorough analysis of this activity. Send your written comments to the Blue Ridge Ranger District at the address



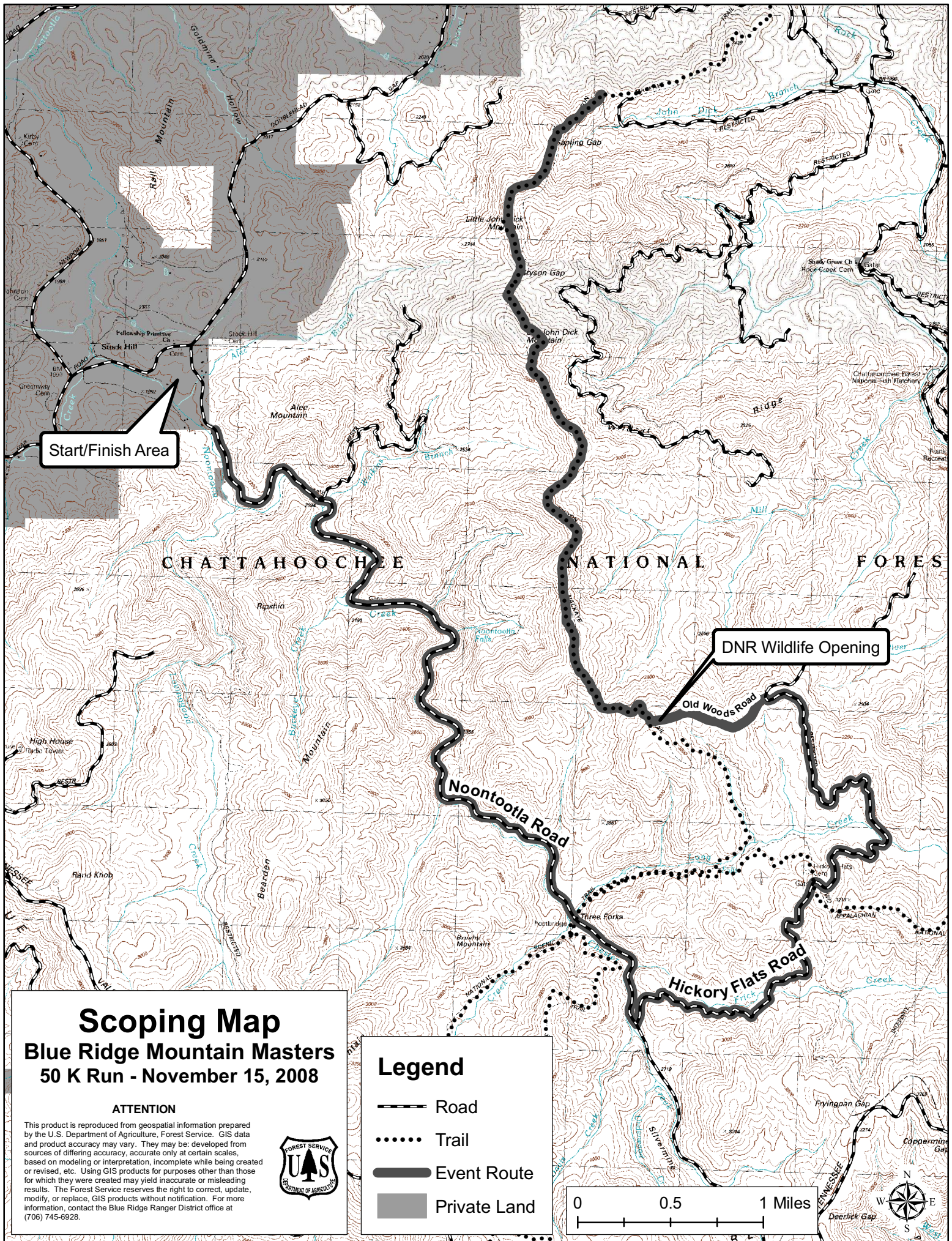
provided on the letterhead. You may also comment by phone or fax (see letterhead), by e-mail to chatt_comments@fs.fed.us, or in person at our office on Highway 515 West in Blairsville, Georgia. Please note that you will be sent further correspondence on the proposed action ***only*** if you request a response in your reply. Feel free to call the Forest Service office if you have additional questions or would like more information regarding these proposed activities.

Thank you for your interest and involvement.

Sincerely,

/S/ ALAN POLK

Alan Polk
District Ranger



Scoping Map

Blue Ridge Mountain Masters

50 K Run - November 15, 2008

ATTENTION

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Legend

- Road
- Trail
- Event Route
- Private Land

0 0.5 1 Miles

